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Coaching Writers: Three Lessons a Writing Teacher Can Learn from a High School Swim Coach

By Jason J. Griffith

Exiting the pool after a race, a dripping swimmer asks, "How was that, Coach?"

First, I offer what I liked about the swim. "Great finish. You were charging hard into the last wall, and it seemed like you were gaining momentum as you went." Then, I ask questions to gather the athlete's perspective on the race. "How did you feel in the middle? And what happened on that second turn? That one looked a little slow." After listening to the answers, I give feedback. "The fact that you had energy at the end is a good sign. That shows that you can push it a bit more in the middle of the race. Also, I want you to focus on keeping your body low on your turn. You'll get off the wall quicker." And with that, I send the athlete off to cool down with a few thoughts on how to revise for the next race. This simple approach as a swim coach is notably similar to how I interact with student writers as an English teacher.

I am fortunate that three of my life's passions (swimming, writing, and teaching) converge in my dual position as a 10th grade English teacher and the head coach of the varsity swim team at my alma mater. While balancing demands as both a teacher and a coach makes it tough to keep up, I continue to notice places where these separate positions overlap, especially when it comes to working with swimmers and mentoring student writers.

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Fast swimming, like good writing, is relative. Since swimmers and writers have unique starting points, evidence of improvement varies for each individual. While there are general standards of quality, swimming and writing are really about self-refinement. Renowned UCLA basketball coach (and former high school English teacher) John Wooden said, "Success is peace of mind which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming" (qtd. in Duncan-Andrade 45). This is the beauty and challenge of both swimming and writing: there's always room for improvement. The work only ends when the swimmer or writer says the piece or race is good enough.

Regardless of their starting points, all swimmers and writers can benefit from the focused help of a coach or mentor--someone who motivates, challenges, and inspires; someone who gives criticism and encouragement; a guide who offers clear steps toward improvement. Just as a coach shows athletes how to succeed in sports, a writing teacher "must become a mentor… we must stand next to our students and show them how real writers write" (Gallagher 7). In coaching both swimmers and writers, there are three major lessons that overlap: embracing the role of a coach; giving honest, timely, specific, digestible feedback; and trusting the process.

Lesson 1: Embrace the role of a coach.

In many instances, coach and teacher are synonyms, but some qualities of effective coaching bear further examination. A clichéd criticism is that "those who don't do, teach." Because the "doing" of teaching is so complex (English teachers, for example, not only have to be proficient readers and writers but also able to promote these skills among students), this criticism is unfair; however, most coaches have past experience as players to share. This foundation of experience helps to inspire trust,

another key component of effective coaching. A trusting relationship, in turn, allows coach and athlete to work together as partners towards a shared goal.

Often, coaches' experience shapes their instruction. Kleon notes that "all advice is autobiographical... when people give you advice, they're really just talking to themselves in the past" (1). Because I swam competitively in high school and college, I can share my challenges and triumphs. I can use the things I've learned through decades of trial and error to give better advice. The same is true when coaching writers; I can draw from decades of writing experience as a resource for my students.

Continued exploration and reflection is what allows a coach to transform experience into effective current practice. In a *Running Times* article, an elite runner notes, "the majority of good coaches don't quite reach the level they're going for... there's still the desire, they still have something else to do" (Douglas). Coyle echoes that many master coaches "had once been promising talents in their respective fields but failed and tried to figure out why" (179). A reflective coach continues to examine the how and why, and, "like great teachers, the best coaches are lifelong learners" (Douglas).

As a swim coach, I don't just draw on past experience, but I compete in triathlons and open water races for which I develop and evolve my own training. That study, in turn, gets incorporated into the training I provide to my swim team. Completing a National Writing Project fellowship with the Capital Area Writing Project (CAWP) reinforced the importance of continuing to refine my writing and to share that journey with my students. Not only did I write academically as a student, but now I write articles for educational publications, blog posts, and creative nonfiction pieces. I share this writing with students, and, more importantly, I share the pitfalls and epiphanies of my process.

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Fletcher writes, "through the relationship with a novice, the mentor gets to experience the thrill of the craft (as well as its pain) all over again. In this way, the mentor's passion never gets spent: it gets renewed again and again through the mentoring relationship" (18). For me, it's a loop; working with young swimmers and writers inspires me to refine my own swimming and writing, and then I want to share what I've learned with swimmers and writers. Rather than "those who can't do, teach," I prefer "those who are still doing, teach." It's important for effective writing teachers to continue to write and to share their successes, challenges, and failures with students.

While athletes may be more inclined to trust a coach with an established foundation of experience, a coach must demonstrate selfless interest in athletes for that trust to deepen and last. A runner in Douglas's article notes about her most effective coaches, "I knew they were in it for me and not for themselves." Since trust is often developed in personal, one-on-one relationships, it can be tough to build in a crowded classroom environment. But once trust is established, it is a powerful tool that a mentor can use to help an athlete or writer improve.

Katie, currently a junior, is on my swim team and was in my honors 10th grade English class last year. This year, she asked me to work with her on a short story, her entry to the Scholastic Writing contest. Since I was exploring the idea of coaching writers and had worked with Katie as both a student and an athlete, I asked her why she brought her piece to me. She said, "I knew you wouldn't have told me something about my piece that wasn't true and because I knew you'd give me the honest feedback that I deserve." Katie's answer is intriguing because the use of "I deserve" implies a sense of pride and a need for validation that her ideas and her writing are worthwhile. Then, she said "honest feedback" which means she doesn't just want frivolous compliments, but she wants to know where the

rough edges are. Providing praise and criticism in a way that athletes and writers can appreciate and apply them is based on the kind of trust that can only be developed through experience and personal interaction over time.

One aspect which stands in the way of building trust is assessment. "The cost runs high when we coerce students (through grades, praise, favoritism), however subtly, to shoehorn their emerging language into the narrow parameters we set for what constitutes 'good writing'" (Fletcher 25). In swimming, it's the clock which dictates a good swim. As a coach, I become a partner in the process, helping swimmers to achieve goal times; we work together to achieve external objectives. Since the clock will determine if we are successful, it frees me to simply focus on the most effective training and instruction.

When teachers create a writing assignment, list the criteria, and then assess how well those criteria were met with a grade, it shifts the dynamic between writer and teacher. No longer is it a partnership working to achieve an independent goal, but rather the student is working to satisfy the teacher's requirements. Often, grades actually become a disincentive to growth in writers as we "sabotage our students as risk-takers" (Fletcher 25) through subjective assessment. An ongoing question is how to build trust and partnership between teachers and writers and not allow assessment to get in the way of improvement.

Participation in the Scholastic Art and Writing contest is one of the most successful ventures for witnessing improvement in student writing. While it's not possible or practical for every student to enter Scholastic, I am usual able to encourage around a third of my roughly 100 students each year to craft an entry. There are several things I love about the Scholastic contest including its focus on

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emerging student voices and the vast variety of genre categories (fiction, non-fiction, argument, poetry, etc.), but what I like best is that any worthy piece can get recognition. Rather than a contest with a predetermined number of winners, Scholastic gives merit to any piece that the judges find to be original, be of good technical skill, and have a unique voice. Even if they don't receive recognition, it's valuable for students to enter the contest. I see improvement in writers who invest time and energy in drafting an entry, and these students are often hooked after seeing how much their writing can improve with some work.

Most importantly, working with students on Scholastic entries shifts my role as a writing teacher to that of a coach. I become personally invested as a partner in the student's process. I feel genuinely excited when these students receive recognition just like when swimmers qualify for a post-season meet, and I feel just as heart-broken when a solid piece doesn't get recognized as when a hard-working swimmer falls short of a stated goal. When I'm not worried about matching criteria to a grade, it frees me to collaborate with the writer more effectively.

This individual guidance, though challenging in a classroom setting, is most effective. Coyle writes that "a coach's true skill consists not in some universally applicable wisdom that he can communicate to all, but rather in the supple ability to locate the sweet spot on the edge of each individual student's ability" (178) and furthermore that master coaches "spent most of their time offering small, targeted, highly specific adjustments. They had an extraordinary sensitivity to the person they were teaching, customizing each message to each student's personality" (Coyle 162).

Lesson 2: Give honest, timely, specific, digestible feedback.

The art of customized and specifically targeted feedback is essential to coaches of swimming and of writing. Katie, my former student, didn't start swimming competitively until high school. She

mentions that my feedback was part of what motivated her to continue. She shares, "You never told me, 'this is what you're doing wrong.' Instead, you were like, 'here's what we're doing right, and if you work on these things, you're going to be an even better swimmer.'" Katie then draws a comparison to my feedback on her writing, "I know that the pieces are decent, but the more I work on them with the feedback you give me, the better they get."

In writing, as in swimming, it's important for a coach to start with positive feedback. Fletcher writes that, "The mentor reaches into chaos, finds a place where the writing works, pulls it from the wreckage, names it, and makes the writer aware of this emerging skill with words. Careful praise of this kind can fuel a writer for a long time" (14). Swimming and writing are hard, and it's easy to give up. It's easy to quit, it's easy to dog a race, and it's easy to turn in a mediocre writing assignment. It takes work and commitment to refine. While it might be teachers' instinct to immediately mark all the things that are wrong, writers or swimmers are inspired when they understand that they're doing something right and can improve. "Most students write far far better than they will ever know. We have to let children in on the secret of how powerfully they write. We need to let them take inspiration from what they already do well" (Fletcher 14). Positive feedback is a great start, but praise alone will not allow a writer to improve.

At the end of last year, I asked my students who had entered Scholastic to respond to an anonymous online survey. Among other questions, I asked, "What do you want out of a writing teacher?" My favorite answer is, "My best writing teachers are the ones who tell it to me straight." Fletcher explains, "A mentor has high standards... A mentor does not praise mediocre work. A mentor knows the sound and the feel of language skillfully used. The novice writer, who is becoming alive to the possibilities of language, respects that" (13). So, honest feedback about what's not working is also essential to

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students. Again, Katie addresses this in both writing and swimming: "In my writing, you'll go into great depth on what I need to expand more on and what I need to work on, and same thing in my swimming. You don't just say, 'swim faster,' you say specific things every time there's something I need to work on."

Katie introduces "specific" into the list of feedback adjectives, which another student from last year's anonymous survey echoes, "If a teacher sits down with me personally and says, 'instead of this try this,' these personal corrections help me in my next writing." If a swimmer wants to improve after a race, I can't generalize my comments and simply say "good job," or say, "you fell apart there." I've got to give them specific focal points: relax your shoulders off the start, stretch out your streamline, etc. The same is true of writing. I can't just say "work on your beginning" or "the end is nice." I must offer specific compliments and explain what is "good" as well as identify which areas need improvement, and then how to make changes. While offering specific feedback is important, a coach should not take over the piece of writing; the writer must maintain control.

Atwell states, "Writers want response that gives help without threatening our dignity" (217). There's nothing more dignified than autonomy, and if we want to our students to develop their own voices, we must give them choices. Kittle writes, "I don't provide 'answers' in class, I provide possibilities" (81). In the context of giving specific feedback, praise, and suggestions, it's also important to make sure the writer knows he or she is in charge of their own piece. Just as I can't get into the water and swim races for athletes, ultimately, it's the writers who must make decisions about their work.

Given that feedback should include praise, be honest, be specific, and leave the writer in charge, but how much is too much feedback? "Even the most skilled young writer can absorb only a certain

amount of this fire, a limited amount of direct instruction, at any given time" (Fletcher 18). When a swimmer gets out of the water after a race, logistics prevent me from overdoing feedback. I can only talk to each swimmer for a few moments before I need to refocus on the meet. I identify what was most apparent: here's what was good, this needs improvement, and then I turn it over to the athlete: what do you need from me? It's useful to have this brief, immediate conversation because the race is fresh in the swimmer's mind, and the athlete might race again in that same meet and can make on-the-spot revisions. This on-deck mini-conference has taught me a lot about how to conference with writers, and perhaps the most essential lesson is to make sure the writer can digest the feedback I'm feeding them.

As long as feedback is digestible and not excessive, the writing conference is possibly the most effective tool at helping a writer improve because "after-the-fact response from a teacher comes too late" (Atwell 220). Atwell writes, "I confer with kids... so they can consider what's working, what needs more work, and what they can do next to make the writing work better" (221), and she also states that, "the conference becomes an occasion for student and teacher to collaborate on the writing" (230) which nods back to the role of the coach as a partner in the process. Conferencing can be useful at any part of the process, and not all students need the same type of conference. On the pool deck, some swimmers need a pep talk while others are fine with self-motivation. Some swimmers need a race debrief, and others prefer a quiet cool down. I find the same range with my writers; some need help brainstorming ideas; others like reassurance after each step; and some don't like me to see their writing until they have a complete draft. Whether coaching swimmers or writers, the most effective method of giving feedback is simple and time-tested: Praise, Question, Polish (PQP).

During the Summer Institute with the CAWP, I first encountered the vocabulary of the PQP

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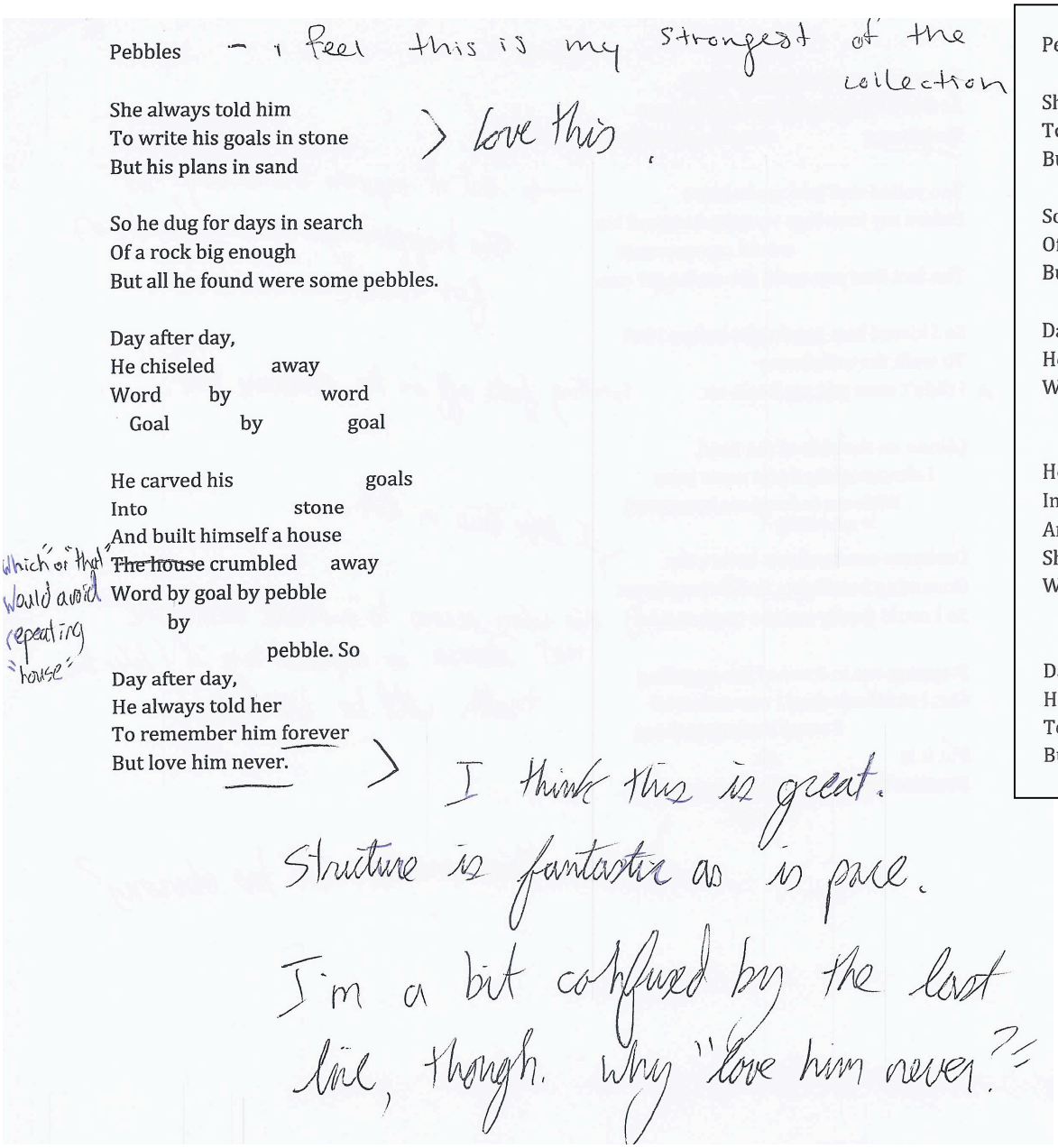
method. "Praise: what is good about the piece? What should not be changed? Question: What do you not understand? Polish: Suggest specific improvements without making the changes for the author" (Neubert and McNelis 57). This broad framework can be easily adapted across disciplines and skill levels. I like to consider a general to specific spectrum of feedback depending on skill level and also depending on where the student is in the process. Less experienced writers or those who are early in the process receive broader feedback, and more skilled writers and those who are later in the process get more specific comments. For a beginning swimmer, I might praise them for trying a new race and then give them very general stroke suggestions. Similarly, for a struggling writer, I'll first compliment the effort it took to finish a draft, and then I'll provide something as general as suggestions on formatting for clarity. Questioning is very important in working with the novice writer because the teacher can gather information about what the student is trying to achieve and can tailor feedback accordingly. On the other end, the PQP method can get much more specific for an advanced swimmer or writer.

Figures 1 and 2 include examples of the PQP method with two student writers during the drafting of their Scholastic entries. In Figure 1, Lydia brought to me a strong draft of a poem called "Pebbles," and I could tell that she was attached to the poem based on her comment at the top of the original draft. I started by complimenting her on the strengths of the piece (pacing and structure), and I followed up with a question about the only place in the poem where I needed clarification. I added one point of polish which was to address the redundancy of using "house" twice in a row. Via the PQP method, Lydia took a strong draft and polished it to a higher sheen. Lydia has a unique poetic voice, but her main strength is being willing to revise; she works on a poem for weeks and weeks through many drafts until she's satisfied. She only brought "Pebbles" to me once, but it's not unusual for her to take a poem through four or five rounds of PQP over a few months.

Figure 1: A draft of Lydia's poem "Pebbles" with my comments demonstrating the PQP method (on the left) and Lydia's revised draft on the right.



Pebbles — I feel this is my strongest of the collection

She always told him
To write his goals in stone
But his plans in sand

> love this.

So he dug for days in search
Of a rock big enough
But all he found were some pebbles.

Day after day,
He chiseled away
Word by word
Goal by goal

He carved his goals
Into stone
And built himself a house
~~The house~~ crumbled away
Word by goal by pebble
by
pebble. So

Which or "that" would avoid repeating "house"

Day after day,
He always told her
To remember him forever
But love him never.

> I think this is great. Structure is fantastic as is pace. I'm a bit confused by the last line, though. Why "love him never?"

Pebbles

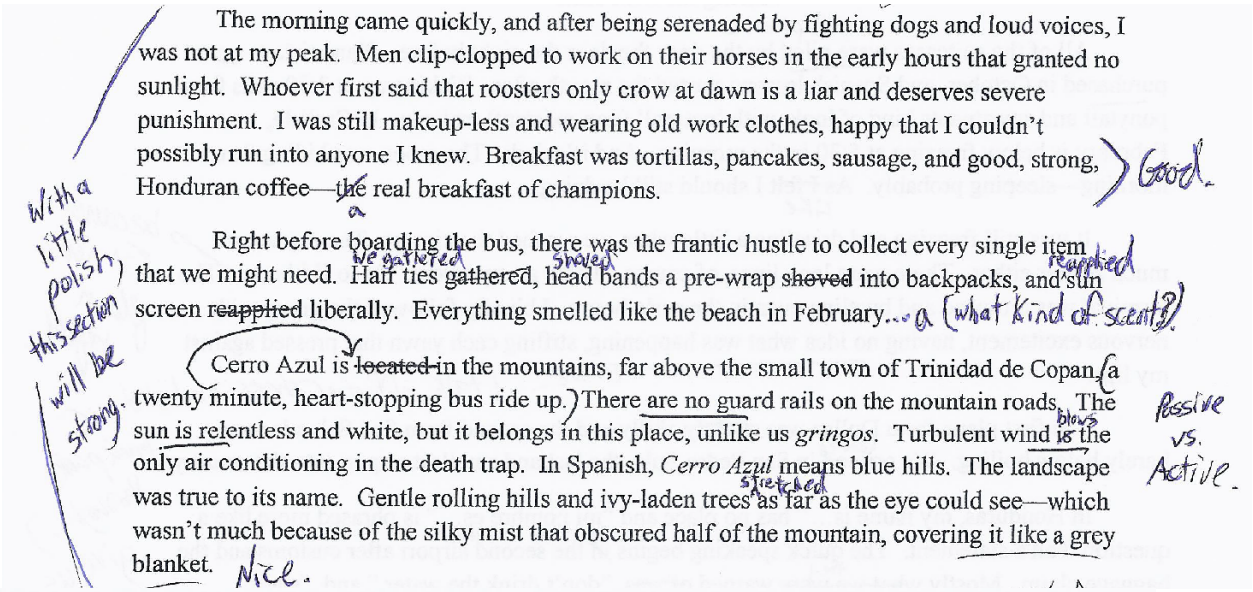
She always told him
To write his goals in stone
But his plans in sand

So he dug for days in search
Of a rock big enough
But all he found were pebbles.

Day after day,
He chiseled away
Word by word
Goal by goal

He carved his goals
Into stone
And built himself a house of love
She watched it crumble away
Word by goal by pebble
by
pebble. So
Day after day,
He always told her
To forget him never
But find someone better.

Figure 2: An excerpt of an early draft of Sofia's essay with my comments demonstrating the PQP method (top), and Sofia's revised draft (bottom).



The morning came quickly, and after being serenaded by fighting dogs and loud voices, I was not at my peak. Men clip-clopped to work on their horses in the early hours that granted no sunlight. Whoever first said that roosters only crow at dawn is a liar and deserves severe punishment. I was still makeup-less and wearing old work clothes, happy that I couldn't possibly run into anyone I knew. Breakfast was tortillas, pancakes, sausage, and good, strong, Honduran coffee—~~the~~ a real breakfast of champions.

Right before boarding the bus, there was the frantic hustle to collect every single item that we might need. ~~Hair ties gathered~~ We gathered, ~~head bands a pre-wrap shoved~~ shoved into backpacks, and ~~sun screen reapplied~~ reapplied liberally. Everything smelled like the beach in February... a (what kind of scent?)

Cerro Azul is ~~located~~ in the mountains, far above the small town of Trinidad de Copan. (a twenty minute, heart-stopping bus ride up.) There are no guard rails on the mountain roads. The sun is relentless and white, but it belongs in this place, unlike us *gringos*. Turbulent wind ~~is~~ blows the only air conditioning in the death trap. In Spanish, *Cerro Azul* means blue hills. The landscape was true to its name. Gentle rolling hills and ivy-laden trees ~~as far as the eye could see~~ stretched—which wasn't much because of the silky mist that obscured half of the mountain, covering it like a grey blanket. Nice.

With a little polish, this section will be strong.

Good.

Passive vs. Active.

The morning came quickly, and after being serenaded by fighting dogs and loud voices, I was not at my peak. Men clip-clopped to work on their horses in the early hours that granted no sunlight. Whoever first said that roosters only crow at dawn is a liar and deserves severe punishment. I was still makeup-less and wearing old work clothes, happy that I couldn't possibly run into anyone I knew. Breakfast was tortillas, pancakes, sausage, and good, strong, Honduran coffee—a real breakfast of champions.

Right before boarding the bus, there was the frantic hustle to collect every single item that we might need. We gathered hair ties, shoved head bands and pre-wrap into backpacks, and reapplied sun screen liberally. Everything smelled like the beach in February, lemony and metallic.

Cerro Azul is a twenty minute, heart-stopping bus ride up the mountains, far above the small town of Trinidad de Copan where we were staying. Nothing stands alongside the road to prevent the bus from flying into the ravine below. The sun glares, relentless and white, but it belongs in this place, unlike us *gringos*. Turbulent wind provides the only air conditioning in the death trap. In Spanish, *Cerro Azul* means blue hills. The landscape was true to its name. Gentle rolling hills and ivy-laden trees graced the slopes as far as the eye could see—which wasn't far because a silky mist obscured half of the mountain, covering it like a grey blanket.

Figure 2 features a few paragraphs from Sofia's personal essay about a mission trip with her church's youth group. Sofia's strengths in her early draft include her vivid use of details. My PQP focused on

helping her bring these out and eliminate any small hiccups the reader might encounter. I started by praising some of my favorite details like "the grey blanket" of the hills, and then I offered a question to help her draw out the scent of the sunscreen, and finally, I offered some simple changes in diction and syntax to let her piece really shine. With Sofia, we went through three rounds of PQP, and the figure represents an early draft on her part, and her finished paragraphs.

With both Lydia and Sofia (along with Katie), I have an ideal writer/coach relationship because they are not currently in my English class, so assessment doesn't get in the way. I taught Lydia and Sofia when they were 8th graders before I moved to my current 10th grade position, so there's a foundation of trust. Now that they are both sophomores with a different English teacher, they bring their writing so that we can conference for their writing's sake, not for a grade. When Sofia asked me to conference on her piece, I asked her to reflect on the feedback I gave, and she shared, "You pointed out things that I did well which is good for my self-esteem, and you helped me realize what could be phrased better. Your suggestions changed how my writing sounded without changing the content."

Another of my favorite answers from last year's survey was this advice, "Guide me in the right direction, but don't give me all of the answers" which seems to be an apt clincher with regards to giving feedback to writers. An enduring question is how to build the type of writer-coach relationship that I've found effective with Katie, Lydia, and Sofia with traditional assessment in the picture. Part of the answer seems to lie in grading more of the process rather than the product.

Lesson 3: Trust the process.

Process is an easy one for swimmers; it's built into the season. Most swimmers know that if they're training properly and don't get sick or hurt that their times are going to improve. Each race is a chance

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to retool for the next one, each day of practice builds strength and endurance, and at the end of the season, swimmers hope to earn their best times. Process is a little harder for writers. Many of my students think that writing is either something a person is inherently good at or not. Unless I require drafts (even if I give plenty of time), many students wait until the night before a writing assignment is due to complete it. Dean writes that "revision is hard... Writers are expected to figure out what isn't working with a draft and know how to fix it and then have the ability to do so" (149). In my experience, one of the biggest stumbling blocks to student writers' improvement is the lack of honoring a process.

In order for writers to improve, though, a process is essential; a swimmer gets better by swimming; a writer gets better by writing and revising. Wooden said, "Don't look for the big, quick improvement. Seek the small improvement one day at a time. That's the only way it happens-- and when it happens, it lasts" (qtd. in Coyle 170). In *Bird by Bird*, Annie Lamott put it a bit more crudely (and humorously) by introducing, "the idea of shitty first drafts. All good writers write them. This is how they end up with good second drafts and terrific third drafts" (21). We must make sure our students get beyond that first draft.

Good writing is about coming up with an idea and seeing it through to the end; it's about applying feedback from the coach to revise and improve. How do we encourage our students to engage in a process and to discover the way that they write best? The first facet of the answer goes back to feedback and assessment. Students have to know that their labors can bear fruit (be it a passing grade, praise from the teacher, etc.), even if they are not a "good writer" by arbitrary standards. "The mentor will not penalize the student whose risks do not immediately produce a superbly written essay or report. We need to redefine the success ethic... to mean not only 'did you get it right?' but also 'Did

you take a chance?' (Fletcher 17). I wouldn't penalize swimmers for being slow or inept, but instead, I'd redefine a standard of success and give them a pathway to it. In order to be effective coaches, "our standards had to be dynamic enough to respond differently to the unique talents and needs of each student, without sacrificing those standards--everybody treated differently under the same set of rules" (Duncan-Andrade 45). Differentiating standards of success for writers is a start, the next piece is demonstration.

Just as I'd demonstrate proper stroke technique or arrange a demonstration of a stroke drill, writing coaches must demonstrate a writing process. Gallagher suggests:

> If we want our students to grow as writers, we have to come out from behind the writing curtain and model to our students what good writers do. We can't hide, like the Great Oz, standing behind the curtain, barking our writing assignments. We can't simply present our students with beautiful, polished drafts and ask them to replicate them. If we want our young writers to improve, we have to plant ourselves in the middle of our classroom and demonstrate how we approach this confusing thing we call the writing process. (225)

Kittle expands:

> I will bring in a draft of the piece I talked through with them in class. I put it on the overhead and I reread it in front of them, talking through what I want to do with the piece and what I'm struggling with, marking up the text as I revise my thinking and add notes or cut parts to make it flow better. Students love to participate; they comment on what I'm doing and suggest phrases. I use this opportunity to talk about peer-conferring techniques. I point out which feedback helps and which doesn't. (78)

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Writing coaches must be brave enough to demonstrate live writing; to share our work and to share how we think in front of our students. It's ok if they see us struggle. Writing's not easy, and they'll see our method for working through challenges, and that focused work will lead to improvement.

As a swim coach, I try to practice adaptive coaching. First, I start with the end goal in mind and look at our timeframe: what do we want to accomplish, and when do we want to get there? Then, I establish some benchmarks, and make adjustments along the way. Adaptive coaching means identifying what the team is doing well and not doing well and making training changes accordingly. This works with writers too. After working through any given class set of writing assignments, I identify a few positive trends and a few pieces of constructive criticism that we work on as a class and then focus on during the next piece of writing. We take sections of student work from volunteers and project them onto the SmartBoard so the class can identify error patterns and offer suggestions for improvement. While I do grade a "final copy," I also like to then offer an additional grade for a revised effort. In addition to individual conferencing and PQP, this type of group collaboration and demonstration reflects the type of useful instruction that happens for swimmers during the season.

The good news with regards to process is that "writing is a craft people can learn and even master no matter where they begin" (Burke 65). If we can adapt our standards to the individual starting points of writers, we will be more successful in encouraging a process among our students.

Conclusion

Ultimately, coaching is about coaxing, whether it's coaxing swimmers through a workout or coaxing writers through a set of drafts. It's about getting students and athletes first to want to do it and then to want to do it better. At the 2013 Eastern States Swim Clinic, Mike Bottom, the head coach of the

University of Michigan's men's swim team started off a presentation on freestyle stroke technique with, "Swimming is a short-term project. Life is a long-term project. We teach you to make short-term changes in the water so you can make long-term changes in life." Bottom's quote puts the sport of swimming into broader context the way that Jim Burke does for writers when he states, "Revision is not just a phase in the writing process but a way of living--a worldview: things can be improved; there are other ways to see or say this; I can do better" (Burke 97).

Swimming and writing have practical applications for a lifetime-- swimming is a low-impact way to keep fit, and writing is essential for communication- but as English teachers, we deal in metaphors. Both refining swimming and refining writing are great metaphors for self-refinement in life. Working through the rough patches in these disciplines allows us to confidently approach those in life. With a caring and knowledgeable coach to provide guidance and reassurance on our path, then no doubt our journey will be easier.

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